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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the development and first 5 years of t-center, one organization's attempt at nontraditional preparation. t-center is an academic research/applied practice unit charged with the preparation of new teachers and professional development of experienced teachers located within a graduate school of education housed at a research university. Since its establishment, t-center has attempted to create a nontraditional subculture that supports a very different approach to teacher education within a traditional institutional culture. This study examined the facilitators of and barriers to transforming small, existing educational units into a larger, long-established educational organization. Data collection involved participant observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. Results provided respondents' recommendations for an effort like the t-center in the areas of leadership, staffing, mission and norms, relationship with the graduate school/university, resources (particularly funding and space), time and involvement of constituents beyond those in the center or host institution, and establishment of an advisory board. Changes the center is making seem responsive to the nation's social needs (e.g., educational environments for the increasing numbers of diverse students). (SM)

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TRANSFORMING FOR EDUCATIONAL REFORM: A CASE STUDY OF A TEACHER PREPARATION CENTER AT A RESEARCH UNIVERSITY

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Paper Discussion

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INTRODUCTION

There is a crisis in teacher education. With the aging of the current teaching force and the anticipated surge of student enrollment, the nation will need an additional 2.5 million teachers by 2009 (American Council on Education, 1999). It is vital for there to be teachers who not only should have the requisite general teaching skills and subject-matter knowledge, but particularly who also need to be aware of and responsive to the differing learning styles and life experiences of children who do not come from traditional, mainstream families.

Much attention has been directed toward teacher preparation, attention that harshly criticizes current practice. Draconian changes are called for in order to improve our teachers and ultimately student performance. The recommended changes include school–university collaborations, school-district intern programs, and the mentoring of emergency-credentialed and new teachers. There is also a demand that those who prepare the teachers—colleges and universities—also revise their programs or get out of the field of teacher preparation.

If one focuses on the latter, what is actually involved in fundamentally shifting the way a school/department of education prepares its teachers? If a radical change is attempted, how does it translate into changed programs and procedures? What are the organizational and cultural dimensions of such a fundamental change? How do those dimensions of one organization relate to and interact with those of the larger, host institution?

A NONTRADITIONAL RESPONSE

In this study, I concentrate on the development and first five years of one organization attempting such a nontraditional approach to teacher preparation: t-center.[1] t-center is an academic research/applied practice unit charged with the preparation of new teachers and the professional development of experienced teachers, located within a graduate school of education that is housed at a nationally renowned research university. It was established in winter 1995 via the joining of two previously existing and decades-old educational units with the Graduate School:[2] a teacher preparation laboratory and an organization made up of six professional development programs and one mathematics skills diagnostic program.

Since its establishment, t-center has attempted to create a nontraditional subculture, one that supports its very different approach to teacher education, within a traditional institutional culture of higher education. The two cultures differ in terms of (1) mission, (2) ideological stance, (3) norms governing relationships of staff and of university–school personnel, and (4) organizational structure and procedures. Thus, it has been an interesting process through which the Center has been formed and has developed during its first five years. The research question guiding this study is: What are the facilitators of and barriers to transforming small, existing educational units into a larger, long-established educational organization?

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[1] This and other unit names in this study are pseudonyms.

[2] Use of uppercase *Graduate School* refers specifically to the Graduate School of which t-center is a part. Lowercase *school* refers to any school, such as an elementary or secondary school or a generic graduate school. Similarly, *University* refers specifically to the institution that houses the Graduate School, whereas *university* refers to any university.

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FRAMEWORK

For this study of change within an organization, I use the premise that there is no single perspective through which the organization and its individuals can be viewed. Martin (1992) offers an empirical case in point in her report on OZCO, a pseudonym for "a large, multinational electronics company" (p. vi). She portrays OZCO and its operations through three perspectives: Integration, Differentiation, and Fragmentation. Her goal is not to tout one over another, but rather to show how the same actions are perceived differently by OZCO personnel. Her discussion reveals the differing perspectives at play. The Integration perspective focuses on consensus within an organization and excludes ambiguity. The Differentiation perspective, however, relies on what the Integration chooses to ignore: lack of consensus. Instead, Differentiation looks at subcultures within the larger organization and how these subcultures interact with each other and the larger unit.

Of particular interest to this study is what Martin describes as the nexus approach to the Differentiation perspective (1992, pp. 109–111). The nexus approach highlights the important influences of external cultures on the perceptions and beliefs of an organization's members. This approach recognizes and values the influence of "feeder cultures" (Louis, 1985, cited in Martin, 1992, p. 111) on those within an organization. In the case of t-center and its host Graduate School, the feeder cultures would be the K–12 community for the former and the realm of academe within a research university for the latter.

Fragmentation looks at both consensus and what Martin calls dissensus. The crux of this view is that there are not clear-cut operations or views within an

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organization. Rather, there is fluidity between and within the various cultures. Similar to Wheatley's chaos theory (1992) and its positive view of the seemingly dissonance of interactions, the Fragmentation perspective recognizes the reality of variation—in intentions and perceptions—and of how considering such variation is important to a study of organizations. When one also takes into account the influences of a culture external to the organization, such as the nexus approach of the Differentiation perspective, one has a good tool for interpreting the reality that is t-center.

For the present study, it is important to recognize that there are varying stances from which each participant comes. There are differing opinions as to what and who carries more weight and what is to be (more) valued. Concomitantly, there are differences in goals and in how to achieve those goals. One of the issues explored in this study is a potential difference in cultural beliefs between the Center and the host institutions. Another issue is the historical premise of higher education and its relationship to K–12 educators. For t-center to function successfully in its goals of collaboratively working with the K–12 community from within an institution of higher education, the perspectives of the interactants will need to be explored. By so doing, it is hoped that any differences can then be addressed and any supportive actions can be strengthened.

METHODOLOGY

The research method chosen for this study is that of an ethnographic case study. Such a methodology is particularly appropriate because one of the keys to the study is discovering the day-to-day operations of t-center, including the

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meanings the individuals involved attach to their settings and how they interpret the activities in those settings (Merriam, 1998; Wilcox, 1982). Ethnographic research seeks to reveal the collective behavioral and belief systems of a group of people, that is, their culture. These systems are shared by the participants and passed on to newcomers. The researcher learns from the participants: He or she learns what is meaningful and what is not (Hymes, 1974, 1980; Lutz, 1981; Spradley, 1979).

Included in the analytical framework turned out to be an unexpected but apt comparison of the Center's work—and its staff's passionate commitment to it—to what Burton Clark (1972) calls an organizational saga. The passion and the dedication demonstrated by those within t-center reveal a uniformity of purpose that is interesting and indicative of how the Center's staff and students view their work.

> An organizational saga is a collective understanding of a unique accomplishment based on historical exploits of a formal organization, offering strong normative bonds with and outside the organization. Believers give strong loyalty to the organization and take pride and identity from it. (Clark, 1972, p. 178)

Finally, using the multiple perspectives frameworks espoused by Martin (1992), I examined the various recommendations offered by the Center's personnel and Graduate School administrators.

Among the data collection methodologies used in this study are participant observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. An ethnographic case study approach encourages use of multiple data collection techniques that, cumulatively, reveal a detailed portrayal of the social, political, and overall cultural systems involved in the daily activities of the students, staff,

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and faculty that comprise and interact with t-center. Multiple techniques also allow for the important area of validation. A single representation of an event is not as credible as various takes of that same event. The objective of using these methods is to obtain as accurate a sense as possible of t-center and the Graduate School in which it is housed.

Participant Observation

Participant observation was carried out in two ways: by virtue of my former role as Chief Administrative Officer of the Center and by the graduate student researcher hired to assist with data collection during the academic year 1999–2000 and again in Fall 2000. The graduate student researcher was introduced to the Center in Fall 1999 as someone who would be documenting the activities of the Center.

Recognizing the potential difficulties in conducting research at one's own site (e.g., Labov's "observer's paradox" [1972, p. 209]: the actuality that some Center co-workers might perceive me as my title before or instead of as an individual who explicitly states and attempts to practice a nonjudgmental approach to professional relationships), the nature of the study changed between the preliminary orals and the final writing. It became a documentation of the history of the development of t-center, rather than an exploration of potential difficulties to be found between the Center and its host institutions and between the Center and its stated agenda of social justice. The latter outlooks presumed adversarial relationships, about which some of the potential interviewees would not want to talk, especially to a key Center administrator.

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Interviews

The focus of the study was one of developing documentation of the formation of t-center and of its interactions with its host institution(s). Thus, the interviewees were asked to serve as consultants to other universities that were interested in starting a center like t-center on their campus. The interview protocol was developed in keeping with that premise.

The interviews were semi-structured, geared to elicit specific information about the Center, but also allowing for the interview to go where the respondent wanted. The intent was to engage the interviewees in a conversation about the Center, probing for information about its development, about the units that were merged together to create the Center, and about recommendations for others. The notion of preparing a type of consultants' report was actually based on fact, being as at least three out-of-state institutions had contacted either the co-directors or myself with just such questions about forming a center on their campus.

This type of interviewing is also appropriate for this study because of the partnership established between interviewer and interviewee: " . . . interviewees in qualitative interviews share in the work of the interview, ... They are treated as *partners* rather than as objects of research" (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 10, emphasis in the original). As t-center is heavily based in the ideology of collaboration, both in the classroom and in its internal operations, this type of research methodology seems to be one that would be apropos and best received by the participants.

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The interviewees were selected according to criteria developed by the student assistant and me based on her observations and on the information sought to best inform others who are interested in creating a center at their home institution. The Center's Governance Committee was also involved in the selection, following loosely the concept of occupational clusters in network studies described in Milroy (1980, pp. 50–51). This concept is based on the notion of the interconnectedness of people's networks of affiliation. In this case, the affiliation is that of working in or with the Center. Although Milroy's work is identifying communities on the basis of their speech patterns, I felt it a useful tool for the present study. It advocates a researcher gaining access to those in a network via assistance from other members in that network.

For this study of t-center, I wanted to speak with those most knowledgeable about the Center's history, especially including experience with or in the founding units, TPL and COAT. The student assistant and I developed a list of approximately 30 names of individuals who fit the criteria. Next, the list was shared with the Center's Governance Committee, with a request that the members select 15 people they felt most important for me to interview to get a thorough understanding of the formation of the Center. The "finalists" were those who received at least two recommendations from the Governance Committee. There was one exception in that the student and I decided to add one person who had experience with the Center from the perspective of the Graduate School's administration but who did not receive the requisite minimum of two votes. Our reasoning was to add another perspective from the

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Graduate School, which did not have as much representation as those within the Center.

It turns out that Graduate School faculty were not included on the list generated by the graduate student and me or on those supplied by the Governance Committee. As is discussed later in the study, this exclusion is representative of the faculty's (lack of) awareness of the Center's formation. As some Center and Graduate School administrators describe them, the Center's early years fell "under the radar" of most of the Graduate School's faculty for a variety of reasons, discussed later. Therefore, the faculty were not knowledgeable about its formation, which thus rendered them ineligible for consideration as interviewees.

The final interviewee list totaled 22 individuals: 4 "general" Center personnel ("general" in that they did not work with either of the two founding units), 6 who had worked with the Teacher Preparation Laboratory, 7 who had worked with the Content-Area Programs, and 5 who worked as Graduate School administrators and who had regular and frequent interaction with the Center during its formation and/or subsequently.

The interviews were conducted by the graduate student assistant (4) and me (18) during the months of October and November 2000. They ranged in length from 45 minutes to two hours; all were audiotaped with the interviewees' permission. Most were conducted in meeting spaces in the building where t-center was located, although some took place in the interviewee's office on or off campus; two were conducted over the telephone (being as the respondents had moved out of state); and one was held in my home. The graduate student

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interviewed those with whom I had had the most interactions in my role as Center administrator (two Graduate School administrators and two general Center personnel). The rationale was that the student would most likely be able to get another, fresher perspective than I, given my work history with the interviewees.

The audiotapes were transcribed by a third-party transcriber, one unfamiliar with the interviewees. I then matched the transcriptions against the audiotapes and made any changes relating to passages the transcriber had deemed inaudible or unintelligible. I used transcription notation based on Gail Jefferson's system (Atkinson & Heritage, 1984). For example, material within parentheses is my best guess as to what the speaker said. Material within square brackets is wording I added, for example, to clarify a pronoun or to change a person's or institution's name for anonymity. The transcriptions were sent to those interviewees who so requested. None made any changes.

Document Analysis

Document analysis is another method that allowed me to ascertain the scope of the Center's activities as well as their intended purposes. Included among the documents reviewed were minutes of the meetings held in 1994–95 of staff and faculty involved in planning t-center; the Center's and the Graduate School's mission statements, informational brochures, and newsletters; minutes from meetings of the Center's Guidance Committee, general staff, and administrative/programmatic staff; memos to and about t-center from Graduate School and University administration; and papers presented at professional

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organization meetings. I have access to these primarily because they are publicly distributed or are part of my work files.

FINDINGS

Leadership

The recommendations for the leadership of a center like t-center differ depending on who is giving the advice. Graduate School administrators advise that there be one key person to whom they can turn for answers. Conversely, Center staff are almost unanimous in their recommendation that the leadership be shared by at least two individuals, primarily one—a senior faculty member—who is connected to and can garner the respect of the academic community and the other who is similarly connected to and experienced with the public schools.

> Yeah, I'm a firm believer that there's one person at the top, that sharing power, even if divided according to some generally agreed upon principle, is the wrong thing to do. . . . (Interview 15:96, Graduate School administrator, November 2, 2000)

> [Q: And your wish to include the practitioner [as part of the leadership] in your ideal situation would be for what reason?]
> Actually and symbolically. I think actually because I think it brings a kind of perspective we're looking for, and I think symbolically it really honors the equal balance or the equal importance of . . . scholarship and practice. It's both symbolic, and I think actually that it brings an important perspective. . . . You probably want to pick someone who is respected in practice. (Interview 13:87–88, t-center academic personnel, November 1, 2000)

These varying viewpoints represent two of Martin's (1992) perspectives, Integration and Fragmentation. The Graduate School administrators' view of a single person at the helm of the Center reflects an Integration perspective, which "encapsulates and enshrines an established authority" (Martin, 1992, p. 186). The

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dual leadership mode espoused by the Center's personnel seems to be perceived by the Graduate School administration as pertaining to the Fragmentation perspective, which "brings ambiguity to the foreground, rather than excluding it or channeling it outside a realm of cultural or subcultural clarity" (Martin, 1992, p. 130).

Interviewees also give their suggestions about the characteristics and qualifications of the leader(s). The qualifications are given in reference to the center being housed at a university, which the majority of interviewees recommend as the better site than at a school district or community center. Locating the center at a school district could potentially signal alignment with and support of that particular district, at the expense of the others with which the center might want to work. Housing it at a community center would present problems of not having the symbolic credibility with either the K–12 personnel or the university faculty. Both alternate sites raise questions about funding sources and about getting university faculty involved in the center to work off campus. The latter could also be problematic from the point of view of the faculty members' promotion and tenure. If the faculty are not seen in and around their graduate school, it is possible that their chairs would not recognize that they are working on their scholarship pursuits and are doing rewardable things (see, e.g., discussion of professional development schools in Holmes, 1995, pp. 51–65; Interview 15:86, Graduate School administrator, November 2, 2000).

Thus, the university/college site for such a center is deemed the best by the interviewees. Primary reasons are the proximity to and chances to interact with the university faculty and students involved in the center; access to the

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university's resources, such as the library; and the prestige factor. Some of the K–12 personnel might enjoy working or attending institutes on the campus, as many of the t-center K–12 staff and institute attendees have.

The interviewees who recommend that the center be located on a campus also recognize the necessity for involving faculty—specifically tenured faculty—in at least one of the director positions.

> That's the one thing about tenured professors, you can't get rid of them. Anybody else, theoretically, can be gotten rid of in a budget crunch. If a tenured professor is hanging on to something, it has a tendency to at least always be constantly staying on the radar screen. . . . Gail often said that one of the privileges and responsibilities of tenure is you can say things that are—you can stick up for things. (Interview 13:84, 86, t-center academic personnel, November 1, 2000)

Another respondent suggests that who the director(s) is depends on the center's constituents and the tenor of the relationship between the K–12 community and the university.

> . . . it really depends on the character of the faculty and the character of the communities you want to [interact with] and sort of where the bigger problem is. . . . So for us, I guess we had both problems. We had a problem of getting research faculty engaged with schools, and we had a problem with creating legitimacy with schools. But I guess if I were going on a consulting basis, that would be my first question. And if there were a lot of research faculty who were already doing work in schools, but there was no legitimacy for more developmental approaches to that, if it was still extracting, extracting, extracting, we might be tempted to hire a former superintendent to build that credibility and [have them] say "Oh, if [name of a former city superintendent] is there doing this, that must mean they're serious." On the other hand, if there are a lot of research faculty who don't get it and who need to be drilled and needled into doing more work that is of service, then I think it's imperative to have somebody who speaks that language and who has the credentials to back that up. (Interview 18:32, 38, Graduate School administrator, November 22, 2000)

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And the speaker gives another reason for having a senior, tenured faculty member at the helm. The reason was not voiced among the interviewees in these words, but it is very important in academe:

> And I guess what I haven't said yet, which is really significant in Gail's role, is [have] somebody who is powerful enough to protect junior faculty who get involved in the work. (Interview 18:38, Graduate School administrator, November 22, 2000)

Other recommendations about the characteristics and qualifications of the center's leaders include:

> I think you need strong leaders. People who are really committed to whatever your overriding mission is, no matter what all the different parts are trying to do individually. . . . And I think you really need people who have very strong leadership [skills] but who are also connected to—have good relationships with people in their institution, in their host institution, who can help them in their work. . . . [Y]ou need somebody who's a politician but who also is a very strong leader, particularly if you're trying to do this in a setting where there may be conflicting ideologies or there may not be one-hundred percent buy-in from people outside as to what you're trying to do. (Interview 11:36, t-center staff member, October 30, 2000)

> Collaborative, energetic, competent, probably someone who is well grounded in the research. If you're going to do it in a university setting, someone who is respected and well grounded in sort of the academic sphere. Those would be some of the things that I would suggest. Stamina. A sense of humor. [Q: Why the sense of humor?] Because you just got to have it. And some of it is funny, just the number of things that can go wrong and everything. (Interview 13:76, 78, t-center academic personnel, November 1, 2000)

Beyond discussions about the top leaders, there is less difference of opinion among the recommendations for others who share the mantel of directing the center's operations. The Center staff again recommend something that is inclusive of all voices who have a stake in the Center's operations. The School's administrators are either silent on this aspect or encourage a team that has at least one person who is the primary interactant with the School's

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administration. For the latter, the key is having someone available who is not only knowledgeable about the Center's programmatic and fiscal operations, but also about the host's institutional needs of reporting and accountability.

> And I think that having representation from the different groups on whatever leadership medium you come up [with] is really important. . . . All different groups need to be reflected in the leadership group because that's the only way we're going to help get other people's voices heard. And to help people see that the leadership group is really a place where everybody gets to participate at some point in their career. (Interview A:44, t-center academic personnel, November 20, 2000)

> Usually, it's the associate director, okay, whose major role is administration as well as the academic side. It's usually the manager. . . . Where I think the directors are key to putting the Center where those opportunities happen, to make it happen, I believe it's usually the associate director and the manager. (Interview B:68, Graduate School administrator, October 19, 2000)

> I think it's [the Center is] changing. I think with the executive directorship under [name of interim executive director] there is someone to go to both from the administrative side and the faculty or programmatic side, ... Right now, the change that t-center is going through partly in their restructuring is to model after another [Graduate School] center that, from an administrative point of view, some of us have felt is a good model [a]nd that allows there to be other than the . . . codirectors, . . . someone that kind of bridges the gap between administration and the program side of the house. (Interview D:6, 16, 39, Graduate School administrator, November 7, 2000)

It is interesting that this administrator compares t-center with this other particular center. Previous conversations about the two with this individual and others, both in the Center and in the Graduate School, described two very different operational styles. The other center is very top down, whereas t-center is very collaborative.

What this researcher would recommend to another center, based on findings from all aspects of this study, is that the center's leadership should respond to and be respective of both its major constituents: the K–12 community

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and the university. This could be done by having at least two individuals in charge, one senior faculty member respected in the graduate school/university and also by the K–12 community. The other should be someone familiar with the K–12 community, by virtue of prior teaching or administrative experience. If it is the latter, that administrator should be someone who either has had K–12 teaching experience or who is respected by the K–12 instructional personnel. The key is to have people who can establish a credible and committed presence of the University in the K–12 arena and who carry a similar presence in the academic realm, that is, people who understand and can credibly interact in both worlds.

From the point of view of the graduate school's administrators, the center also needs to be very clear about its objectives and its operational procedures. There needs to be one "go-to" person with whom the administrators can interact and who can competently, precisely, and quickly describe the center's work and fiscal procedures. This person should be someone familiar with all aspects of the center's programmatic and fiscal operations, as well as with the responsibilities all units within a university have to funding agencies and university policies.

Within the center, however, the mantle of leadership should be shared and reflect all voices within the center, from student workers and support staff to academic personnel. Decision making should be done collaboratively, by soliciting input from all stakeholders. When a final decision is made, it should be made clear to the constituents what the process was that led to the decision and what the parameters are that might have guided the decision-making process.

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Staff

Most of the interviewees are not very expansive in their responses to questions regarding what type of staff a center like t-center would need. Typical answers are that the staff should mirror the diverse communities the Center serves. "If you're starting up a t-center, get good people, make sure you get a good diverse community like we have here. This is great. You get all views and all opinions and influences from everybody, which is nice" (Interview 6:15, t-center staff member, October 10, 2000).

However, there are responses from a staff member and one of the Graduate School administrators that also demonstrate a different stance on the importance of operating under a tight structure versus within a process of inclusiveness. It is interesting to note that the Graduate School administrator is the same one who described the Center's internal operations as "loosey goosey."

> I suppose part of it would be that they need to be very clear about the mission of the center that they're going to establish. They need to hire good people both programmatically and administratively to help them run the place. Not much else. (Interview D:6, Graduate School administrator, November 7, 2000)

> . . . if you're going to bring over a staff, two staffs, and merge them together, I think that people—not just the directors, but everybody—need to really understand what [is] going on [in the transformation] and why, and be involved in that process because I think that that creates a more cohesive unit once you're done and that people need to be involved on more than one level. . . . [W]hen you're considering doing something like this, remember that you need to have all your staff on board, every level of staff on board. I think that's really important. They need to be understanding of the mission. They need to be involved and invested in the mission. They need to be feeling as if they're part of it and that they're working with it. (Interview 16:62, 210, t-center staff member, November 5, 2000)

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In addition to the recommendations from the interviewees quoted here, I would suggest that the staff also be absolutely committed to the enterprise. As several interviewees stated, working on a mission to reform the quality of education for underrepresented children and within underresourced schools is not easy. Thus, it requires a devotion to the work that is essentially altruistic and that does not end once the clock strikes five in the afternoon.

Mission/Norms

Mission and norms are combined here because t-center operationalizes its norms very much as part of following its mission. For example, collaboration and social justice advocacy are two of the primary norms governing work within the Center, among the staff, and with external constituents. As will be discussed later, collaboration is a practice many of the interviewees recommend for a new center. However, the social justice mission of t-center is not always one recommended for other similar organizations. Partially, it is because of the difficulty many in the Center have in defining social justice. Partially, it is because some feel that it need not be the mission driving the work of a center. Rather, they feel that it is more important for a center to have some sort of guiding principles and to be sure those are clearly understood and embraced by all.

> And I think sometimes with social justice, which is mentioned a lot with t-center, but I don't think that that idea is necessarily clear, even though I don't think there's a single definition. I think sometimes it's just sort of said and maybe assumed that people know what that means or what that's all about. . . . if you don't understand that [mission], then I think that your center will have difficulty achieving that goal. . . .
>
> I mean I think [social justice] as a mission, it's very vague. So I think in some ways that's difficult, and so then when you try to be accountable to that, I think it's difficult if you have a vague mission. I

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> think it's very difficult not only for other people to maybe measure what you're doing or to see what you're doing, but I think it's difficult for you to measure what you're doing too, if you don't have a clearly defined goal. So I suppose my suggestion would be that perhaps the center try to have maybe something a little more tangible. And especially if you're trying to do something really innovative like this and maybe where you're operating in a culture where there are—an environment where maybe you're doing something different than others are doing. You might be better served at least initially as you're trying to get things off the ground and trying to get things moving and established to have something a little more tangible that you can maybe redirect in the future. I'm just thinking of how a start up might be able to garner more buy-in or garner more support initially. And it seems like once you are operating, this is probably more looking at a business or something, which I know is a terrible model for education .... (Interview 11:16, 125, t-center staff member, October 30, 2000)

> Well, I'm not sure how important that is [to have an explicit, subjective mission like social justice]. I certainly think there has to be some guiding principles that drive the work. And like any organization, you have to have a shared vision about what we're trying to accomplish. Social justice is certainly one important vision, and that's the one that was selected here. But I think it could be others as well. Just so that all the parties understand it; building that shared vision to me is really very critical. But I could think of many other possibilities other than the one that was selected. (Interview 2:23, t-center academic personnel, October 5, 2000)

A Graduate School administrator's advice similarly focuses less on having an explicit, subjective mission than on a pragmatic need to attend to which of the two units being merged needed the most attention initially.

> From an administrative perspective, the advice I would give to them is that they really need to look at what part of the center needs to be attended to first. So if the priority is teacher preparation, which is the academic degree program, I think that there are a lot of things that need to be taken care of there. And then you would move into the professional development and the research projects. So if I give them any advice, I think they need to think things through on exactly what is the mission and what is it that they want to accomplish and with what type of a time frame. (Interview B:4, Graduate School administrator, October 19, 2000)

To return to collaboration, the commitment to shared governance and to co-developed projects is a strong foundation of the work that t-center does. It is

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thus not surprising that collaboration is almost unanimously recommended by the interviewees as a must-do in the establishment of a new center. Those less enthusiastic about the Center's "democratic processes," as an interviewee described them, were Graduate School administrators responsible for overseeing the administrative fit of the Center within the Graduate School.

These two outlooks reveal two perspectives—Integration and Differentiation—as well as varying levels at which to employ the perspectives. Integration defines t-center's staff's uniform belief in and practice of collaboration throughout their work. The culture to which the perspective is applied is that of t-center alone. However, if one considers another organizational cultural unit, that of the Graduate School as a whole, one sees a conflict between the host and the (now sub)culture of the Center. It seems to be a situation best described by what Martin (1992) calls the nexus approach of the Differentiation perspective (pp. 109–114). This approach takes into account the external, environmental factors that influence behavior and perceptions within organizations, thereby creating conflict and differences. In the case of t-center and its host Graduate School, the external influences are the K-12 community for the former and the discipline-specific, research- and theory-focused realm of research universities for the latter. As described by, for example, Boyer (1990), Clifford and Guthrie (1988), and Shen (1999), schools of education tend to strive academically to be more like the disciplines in other areas of the university: Research is valued, and faculty tend to be specialists in the fields of sociology, psychology, and the like. For a variety of reasons, the K–12 community is essentially not an area to which the schools of education pay attention.

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The collaborative and inclusive nature of t-center and of the operational premise its personnel recommended for another center is not optimal for some of the Graduate School's administrators interviewed in this study. First, there is the Center's personnel's strong belief in the need for involving everyone, at every level, in the formation of the Center and in its daily operations.

> I think that the [semester-long, four-hour] Friday meetings were very important, and I definitely would say that that has to take place, when you're bringing groups together like that. To me, that says that, "you know, we don't have a set idea of how this is going to work, . . . we haven't figured the whole thing out and we need you to help us do that. And we value your expertise and your thinking and we're all coming together to figure this out." (Interview 7:122, 124, t-center academic personnel, October 11, 2000)

> I think that you have to bring in all the different voices. You cannot leave any voices out of here. (Interview 9:237, t-center staff member, October 16, 2000)

> . . . as a center you need to always be aware of people, how are people interacting—are they given opportunities to interact with each other around issues that are important to the Center? (Interview 10:188, t-center academic personnel, October 30, 2000)

Some of the Graduate School administrators see the democratic processes of t-center differently and recommend a firmer structure for a fledging center. Their comments were made at a time when the Center was undergoing yet another reorganization to address a weakness in its ability to quickly provide accurate financial reports to the new dean.

> I think the difficulties that [t-center has] been having to deal with is this huge expansion of their work. . . . I think that the expansion of growing so fast [requires] a re-examination of whether or not their culture really fits the expansion. . . . Because I think that when you get to be real big, it's very hard or time consuming to make decisions by committee. . . .
>
> I think that t-center certainly has built this community culture of everybody pitching in, everybody has to help each other out. I think to a certain degree that that is really very good. The problem that you have is that if a lot of these people are paid off what we call extramural support,

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> they have to identify what projects they're working on. And if you have developed a culture where people can't track where they're spending their effort, then basically those costs are not allowed on the contracts and grants. So then you need to make some cultural changes . . . . But like it or not, there are these set of rules in that when you accept the money, you're saying, "I accept the rules." And you need to find a way to be in compliance. (Interview B:30, 44, Graduate School administrator, October 19, 2000)

> Especially given that it's a University-run organization within the University itself, . . . there are so many overlying and overlapping policies and procedures that govern all of us. And it's easy for those to go kind of off track if people aren't focused on what the parameters are. And where there's too much decentralization, as there sometimes tends to be in the nature of t-center, people need to kind of be reminded of what the basic rules or philosophies are in order to be compliant overall. I think if people are compliant, they can adopt whatever style they want. But it's hard to be compliant when things are sort of loosey goosey, and that tends to be how I see t-center sometimes. . . .
>
> I think it would be fine . . . to be more participatory and democratic if it's within the realm of an overall and overlying organizational strength. I don't see that exhibited [in t-center] as much as I do in other areas, in other centers. (Interview D:29, 31, Graduate School administrator, November 7, 2000)

The Graduate School's emphasis on fiscal compliance was heard loud and clearly by the Center. Several of its key leaders conceded that a clearer and more directive organizational structure should have been incorporated into the Center's operations from the beginning. Of course, that structure should be mediated with flexibility.

> I think that I have come to appreciate the fact that we do need some structures, that this cannot just strictly be something that sort of is always emerging. But there is a need for some order and some structure to provide a sense of freedom and to figure out how to create structures that are liberating and not controlling . . . . We felt like we were going from a hyperstructured situation with several bureaucratic units [to] trying to create something that was much more democratic and realizing that we still needed a sense of who reports to whom and who's going to be responsible for what.
>
> . . . there has to be an administrative infrastructure for these kinds of things. (Interview 13:72, 74, t-center academic personnel, November 1, 2000)

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> We've looked at the human portion of the organization, relationships; I think that was very, very strong. Some of the symbolic things were looked at as well. I think maybe we could have devoted a little more thought to structure, of how all of this fits together and who has responsibilities. (Interview 2:61, t-center academic personnel, October 5, 2000)

> . . . I might have been a little more directive about setting up structures. It maybe took too long. I always wanted everything to completely emerge from the group. I think I've learned now that people actually like it when we set up a structure and say, "How about this? Do you think this might work?" and then you fiddle with it. . . . (Interview C:11, t-center academic personnel, October 19, 2000)

Note that this same interviewee later still advocated a more loosely coupled approach, one that asks for forgiveness rather than for permission.

> I'm sure there're things I could have done better but I would probably use the same sort of approach again. . . .
>
> [In response to being asked for recommendations for another center] ((pause)) To not be too worried about breaking the rules, to just to go for it. Not feel that you have to follow every process, that at the same time you have to be very nice, so people sort of forgive you for blustering through. I don't think you can ever create one of these things if you try to go through all of the steps. (Interview C:11, 23, t-center academic personnel, October 19, 2000)

Overall, the general recommendation is to collaborate with all involved in the center, whether directly or indirectly. Work with those in the school districts to develop programs that they need and in which they will have an investment for the programs' success. Involve all the graduate school faculty in discussions about establishing the center, regardless of their direct involvement in the center. Develop clear guiding principles for the center by talking with and soliciting input from the K–12 community members and from those at the school and university. Respond to the needs of all even if the response is that the needs cannot be incorporated into the new organization.

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If your center plans to take a moralistic stance, such as a social justice agenda, be sure not to assume an attitude nor to present an appearance of being better than your colleagues. Work to involve your fellow faculty members in developing the center's work as a part of the mission of the school, building on the work they might already be doing in the K–12 community.

Be sure to develop an organizational structure for the center that is flexible enough to respond to the collaborative, inclusive requirements of your mission as well as to the possibly more traditional, top-down structure of your host institution. Essentially, do not hesitate to push the envelope when setting up your center, but do so gently, with finesse and politeness. It is possible that you will run into stumbling blocks in the process, but do not antagonize those in the school—faculty and administrators—who are crucial to the survival of the center.

This all will take time, thus do not expect to establish the center in less than a year. Ideally—and depending on the status of your university's reputation in the elementary and secondary districts and on the scope of work your faculty are conducting in those districts—you should plan on a minimum of eighteen months of concerted and frequent discussions and effort.

Center's Relationship with Graduate School/University

As discussed earlier, the Center's personnel primarily recommend that a center involved in similar activities be located on a university campus. Thus the next area to explore is the suggested relationship between the center and its host. As discussed in the previous section, there is a potential for tensions between the two due to the differing feeder cultures (Louis, 1985, cited in Martin, 1992, p. 111) that influence a unit dealing with the K–12 community and one housed at a

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research university. To mitigate that potential, all the interviewees stress communication, a lot of it, often, and between and among various groups: for example, the founding personnel (usually the dean and a senior faculty member) with faculty at the school not involved in the center, with and between the groups being merged together, between the center and the administrative offices, and so on. The goal is to build understanding, buy-in, and alliances.

> . . . you start out in your department and you get a commitment from them. And then you bring the community into and you also bring the university into it and then you've got a commitment from everybody. And you make them all part of what you're doing. (Interview 12:377, Graduate School administrator, October 31, 2000)

> I think any organization like this needs to have political alliances that will keep it safe and will legitimate involvement of the program, otherwise people will run from it. And that's the problem we had at first with both COAT and TPL is that there weren't alliances. In fact, both organizations were really cut off from the general flow of blood and thinking. So recreating those arteries is really critical. And then in terms of substance, creating alliances with individuals and groups that have material that would be of value in the chosen domain. (Interview 18:52, Graduate School administrator, November 22, 2000)

> . . . there needs to be a good flow of information between the unit . . . and [the] dean's office, which includes the [financial] office and [the administrative dean's office]. So that we can either speak for or help out or get information that is needed, say, by the [president's office] or the [office of the chancellor systemwide], and we know who to go to to get it and that kind of thing. . . . The dean should be able to answer for any unit under [the dean's] direction, I think, at all times, whether it's external to [the University] or within [the University]. (Interview D:47, Graduate School administrator, November 7, 2000)

The key individuals in this venture seem to be at the very least the dean of the school and the chair of the department in which the center's academic program is to be housed.

> You have to make sure you have the wholehearted support from the university structure, the upper echelons. And that you have some kind of commitment from them that this is going to be maintained in the best way that it is. That it's not going to be at the whim or the mercy of different

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> administrations that might come in here and there, or of different middle-level people. . . . It's got to be seen as equal to a disciplinary department. (Interview 9:237, 241, t-center staff member, October 16, 2000)

> . . . if it's a grassroots effort, then the dean, who has been secretly hoping something like this would happen, finds it in his or her heart to support it and help it and help it grow. But in some cases it's going to take the dean and the leadership of the dean to work with faculty who are already doing stuff out in schools but in a disorganized way, with no cumulative effect, to work together, to bring their practices together under one umbrella, to get rid of projects that are nice but just aren't going anywhere, to provide resources to faculty, to make them want to be part of this, to use resources that are there to set up an administrative infrastructure so that the faculty don't have to do that. . . . So it's got to be a dean and hopefully a department chair as well who should be involved in this. (Interview 15:146, Graduate School administrator, November 2, 2000)

There are also recommendations that the school revise its rewards structure for faculty who become involved in the center. The following could have been quoted from the literature that advocates a change in faculty rewards (e.g., Boyer, 1990; Shen, 1999), but it actually comes from a Graduate School administrator.

> I have come around to the belief that in a professional school . . . that well-done, well-thought-through, well-documented forms of public engagement—in the schools in this case, with principals, with teachers—ought to be rewarded in the same way that teaching is rewarded and [be] an important part of the dossier. In a research-type environment such as [this University] has, there will never be a substitute for research productivity, but that productivity, that research itself can be field-based, should be field-based, can be field-based, can include interventions and the documentation of that, can involve collaborative work with teachers or whoever, and that kind of research ought to be rewarded in the same way that other kinds of research are. Other institutions that are not so research-oriented, that place a strong value on teaching, it seems to me can also place a similar strong value on this kind of intervention work, this kind of professional service. . . . [By "intervention"] I mean . . . becoming involved in a real-world educational problem or issue that involves collecting data and taking some responsibility for shaping how that data are perceived and then used. If necessary, working with teachers to make the changes that they need to do in their instructional techniques. In working with principals, for example, to help them develop a structure which frees them up to become

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> better instructional leaders and less bureaucratic managers. (Interview 15:86, 88, Graduate School administrator, November 2, 2000)

Another interviewee also evokes the organizational saga's notion of passionate commitment (Clark, 1972), but refers to that passion as also being necessary on the part of the host school.

> So from an institutional perspective, I would say that you've got to realize that it is a passionate undertaking. And that it's not just something you do. I would actually encourage institutions to really think very carefully about a couple of things: about realizing that the work of a place like t-center and specifically the work of faculty within t-center is going to look a little different from the work of a faculty who is simply teaching or doing research or something like that; that in terms of time, in terms of load, in terms of issues, it may be different times, it may not be work on campus. It probably won't be work on campus. It may result in the production of knowledge that looks different from a scholarly article in a research journal. And that I would encourage institutions to think about ways to kind of redefine what counts, redefine load, redefine resources so that you can really support faculty involvement in this. And it's not simply out of their hides or on top of everything else. (Interview 13:96, t-center academic personnel, November 1, 2000)

Turning toward recommendations gleaned from this study's findings, I stress again the need to involve all who are or who might be involved or affected by the establishment of a center. The key words are communicate, communicate, communicate. The communication needs to take place as the development plans are being discussed and also continuously during the center's subsequent operations. The intent is to build bridges that will support the center during tumultuous times as well as calm ones. These bridges should be between the center and its K–12 members as well as between the center and its school/university faculty and administrators. The bridges could be established by constituting an advisory board of those not directly involved in the center,

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such as other graduate school faculty, community members, university trustees or regents, and local politicians (e.g., the mayor).

What seems to have been an important factor in the successful establishment of t-center is that it initially fell "under the radar" of its Graduate School and its faculty. The timing of the Center's development coincided with other events that occupied the Graduate School's attention. For example, there was a Statewide fiscal shortfall and a new approach to University budgeting allocation called Responsibility Center Management (RCM), which attempted to uncloak the costs of running an educational institution and to delegate responsibility for those costs to the school or department level (see Wilms, Teruya, & Walpole, 1997). As Wilms et al. describe, University administrators' attempt to describe and roll out RCM caused quite a negative fervor at the University, especially among the faculty. More specifically, at the Graduate School where t-center was developing, there were four deans during the Center's first five years, which one Graduate School administrator described as eventually being a positive thing.

> [Q: . . . the School has had four deans in five years. How do you think that might have impacted the Center?] It helped. . . . In a period of ambiguity over her, Gail has been able to just sort of steer a path that she's wanted to. . . .
>
> And I'm sure on a day-to-day basis, it's been—it hasn't felt that way for her. I'm sure it's been "Oh, my god, a new dean, I have to justify this whole thing all over again?" And that has to be just completely ((inaudible)). But on the other hand, with so many new deans, people have a hard time focusing. They've been learning so much, so fast, that anything that's not a horrific problem doesn't get such a point of salience. And so long as t-center was doing well and getting good publicity, bringing honor to the School, I mean that's something, I know—
> [Q: Off their radar.] —for [the Interim Dean] at least, ((wipes brow)), "Phew!." (Interview 18:125–134, Graduate School administrator, November 22, 2000)

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Whereas it is not likely that other universities planning on establishing a center like t-center would be experiencing external circumstances such as the Center did, it is important to note the significance of being out of the immediate range of scrutiny, of being under the radar. An optimal opportunity to create an organization that strives to differ from an institution's traditional, hierarchical, and objective set up most likely would succeed when it is not the center of attention.

Resources

The resources most discussed by the interviewees—apart from leadership and staff, which were discussed in preceding sections of this chapter—are funding and space. As discussed in previous chapters, the latter has been and continues to be a source of contention in the formation and daily operations of t-center. It is thus not surprising that it comes up as a definite "must have" in interviewees' recommendations to another center. Space is not only seen as a necessary physical resource, but also as an important symbolic one as well.

> The other thing to have is sufficient space. . . . [Y]ou have to have enough space [so] that people feel that they're—it's a kind of appreciation of your work, your work is that important. (Interview 10:196, t-center academic personnel, October 30, 2000)

> I just think it's so powerful that the right space can send the right signals to people who come and visit, and create the right environment for an open interchange of ideas and reduce status things. (Interview 18:82, Graduate School administrator, November 22, 2000)

Practically, the proximity of the staff to each other seems to help produce feelings of cohesion and to aid efforts at collaboration.

> Well, I think a really important change is when we all moved in together here [to this suite]. I actually think that that was a good idea, and it really made me, for the first time, feel like a part of a center. And actually when

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> I talk about it, I say, "at the Center," and it has meaning. So I think coming together [physically] like that was really important. (Interview 7A, t-center academic personnel, November 8, 2000)

Funding for the center is also seen as both a practical and a symbolic resource. The practical is that any organization needs to have money with which to operate. The symbolic is the source of that money. If it comes from the host institutions, the graduate school and/or the university, so much the better. If it does not, the center should at least have a sufficient and constant source of funding in order to weather changes in administrations that may or may not support its operations.

> Get a clear picture of what are your funding sources and who's going to pay for what and how is that in line with either how you see this [the center] playing out and with University policies. Because you don't want to be caught that if there's a change from one dean who says, "that's fine" and then another dean says, "that's not fine," that's not okay. (Interview 10:174, t-center academic personnel, October 30, 2000)

> . . . if you've got support from the top, you know, if the [president] or [chancellor] of the university kicked in a hundred thousand dollars a year and it was a line item in the campus budget, to support the work of the center, that would be a tremendous statement of support and perception of value in what the center does. (Interview 15:142, Graduate School administrator, November 2, 2000)

> I think I would [recommend to others] to make sure that they have the support of their dean and their chair or of a very generous outside funder, because you need to have a pretty stable resource space. One of the wonderful things that's been here, and it's going away now, that has been this constant source of support from the dean to keep this work going and an investment, and the dean saying, "you know sure you're going to have to go out and raise money, but year in and year out, you're going to have this core support from me, because I really support what you're doing." (Interview C:21, t-center academic personnel, October 19, 2000)

A Graduate School administrator brings in both the symbolic and the practical premises for a center's funding.

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> [The funding] should come from a mix of places. I think there should be a constant sense of experimentation with (new things). It should be funded by foundations and philanthropic services. There should then be a decision made about whether these experiments work or not. And then things should be moved into the [School's] core budget or not or extended. If they [are] moved into the core budget—I think it needs to be funded sort of second by the school or schools . . . whose students are served by the operation. . . .
>
> [The Graduate School] should fund it in part because we run a lot of our student teachers through there [the Graduate School]. So there's a part of that that said the school of ed should fund it. And then there's a big part of that that the schools and school district should fund, that they should pay for services in some sense. But it needs to be made clear to them that they're not paying the full boat, because a part of the State money that comes to the institution should be used for that, which then leads me to the last bucket, which is that the institution as a whole should support this effort, . . . because it is part of why the State gives [the University system] money. I mean that's independent of all this avalanche of Outreach money,[3] and if you ask most State legislators why they support the [systemwide University], somewhere in there is service to the State. (Interview 18:108, 110, Graduate School administrator, November 22, 2000)

My suggestions for another center echo those of the interviewees. Given the important, symbolic significance of space, it is very important that a new center be given not only adequate space in which to function collaboratively, but space that is integrated within the primary operations of the graduate school. The center needs to be connected with the ladder faculty, physically as well as programmatically.

As for funding, all constituents should contribute toward the center's operations. These constituents would most definitely include the host university and graduate school, as well as the school districts, extramural grants, and—ideally, because of the relative flexibility—donor gifts.

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[3] This is in reference to the State's apportioning of money in the late 1990s to the systemwide campuses of the research university for the express purposes of teacher preparation.

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Other Recommendations

Other areas mentioned by the interviewees in terms of helpful items for other centers are time and involvement of constituents beyond those in the center or host institution. When attempting to merge existing units dealing with elementary and secondary education into one unit and into a host organization that does not engage in work with the K–12 community as collaboratively as advocated by a center like t-center, one of the interviewees most closely involved in t-center's effort describes at least a two-year preparatory effort. Key to the efforts were the time a Graduate School administrator—among others—took in laying the groundwork and the personnel brought in to work with the unit that was involved in the professional development of the K–12 teachers.

> I think it was good to have somebody come in early and sort of take the worst of the crud, and I think it was very useful to have somebody do that who, like the former superintendent, is used to that in [names a former district superintendent]. Nothing happened in [the] conversations with the COAT people and the TPL people that surprised [the former superintendent]. And nothing offended [the former superintendent] and nothing made [the former superintendent] feel like [the former superintendent's] job or livelihood or professional reputation was being endangered because as the school superintendent, you know, you do that every time you walk into a board meeting. I would have worried about any faculty member not used to that sort of stuff, walking in and trying to build the organization from those two pieces. If you're starting over again, you might not need the first piece. You might be able to start right off with a faculty member. And I guess I would say, thinking about this in the consulting environment, it really depends on the character of the faculty and the character of the communities who [you] want to impact and sort of where the bigger problem is. That at [this University], by the time Gail took over, [the two districts with which the Graduate School was working] were the most important ones. They got it that we were really committed to doing work in the schools. We had to go through all of that, and that took about two and a half years to get through of that. I mean, I went through two years' worth of meetings with people from the school districts where I just went and got beat up. And I knew I was going to get beat up, and it was like, you know, saying, "hi, I'm from the federal government, and I'm here to help." And they just whomped on me. (Interview 18:32, Graduate School administrator, November 22, 2000)

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Other recommendations not currently carried out by t-center but in keeping with another recommendation is the establishment of an advisory board. The intent would be to increase lines of communication among all those affected by the center and its work: school faculty, K–12 community members, university administrators, and politicians.

> For example, what if we had a governing board for the Center that included the faculty who were not involved? Maybe some other key people who saw this as part of their responsibility. . . . Yeah, some kind of advisory committee, that might be useful, some more formal reporting relationships, where the work was communicated. For example, we have no formal way of sharing with the whole faculty what we do, what are the outcomes of our work. So that those communication links would be part of a structure, a more formal structure, than informal links. That I think could strengthen the position of the Center [with] the faculty. (Interview 2:63, 65, t-center academic personnel, October 5, 2000)

> I think that a center, unlike ours, should have a board of advisors from the community of schools that you're working with, from the legislature, from the local mayor's office, ideally from the regents or board of trustees of the college or university, who are there to be spokespeople for the center, who are there to make the call when you need it to whomever you need, who have giant Rolodexes, who can go out and stump for you when you need it. But who can disseminate the word about the center and what its value is and what it's doing to their audiences, their constituents. And then I think you need significant buy-in and visibility and some leadership from ideally ten to twenty percent of your ladder faculty, so that it's not marginalized within the school. . . . [I]deally, you wouldn't start such an enterprise without that buy-in. That is the degree to which you are foisting it on top of an unsuspecting, unwilling faculty is the degree to which it will be underfunded and marginalized and bitched about. (Interview 15:142, 144, Graduate School administrator, November 2, 2000)

If the future center does decide to embrace social justice or some other, similar agenda as its premise, one interviewee strongly recommends that the center and its personnel be careful about not appearing too moralistic. Some of the faculty not involved in the center might interpret that stance to imply that

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they were not supportive of a similar premise because they were not affiliated with the center. Such an interpretation would not help those faculty's impressions of the center.

> I think that in some ways it [the social justice agenda] was threatening to people. I think that at the same time, it sort of—it was sort of both a lighthouse thing, "this is the way you actually can go. You can take a stand, and it's okay." And I think that it also was just who we are and what we're about. . . . And this might be something to be very aware of because we said we were about social justice. I think that in some ways, it might have appeared that we were trying to claim the moral high ground. And somehow by saying we're about social justice, suggesting that someone who was working in social research methodology was not, and that was not our intention. But that's the one thing I think that's always important to be careful of; that you even embrace those sorts of agendas with great humility and with a sense of strong commitment, but not with that sense of sort of claiming the moral high ground, which puts everybody else a little lower than you. That would be something I'm aware of, and that would be something I would want to be aware of. (Interview 13:126, t-center academic personnel, November 1, 2000)

In sum, the "other" recommendations include a continuation of behaviors mentioned earlier: center founders working in conjunction with members of the K–12 community, particularly its leaders, to establish a mutually agreed-upon method of operation to prepare new teachers and enhance the skills of current ones. This process of co-development should extend from the faculty of the graduate school and the superintendent and principals of the school district to the center's program directors and staff and the schools' teachers and administrators.

Center personnel should also be very aware of the cultural experiences of the units being combined and of any other units that might supply personnel to assist in the center's operations. Being as collaboration, commitment, and passion are among the attributes deemed most important for a center's success,

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any individuals or group added to the mix should at least honor and respect those attributes (see following discussion on "Things to Avoid."

SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

One might question the value this case study can provide to the educational reform arena. My response is that providing documentation of one organization's efforts could prove useful to others as they, too, attempt to improve the quality of teacher preparation and student achievement. The current emphasis on educational reform does not appear to be of short duration. In addition, as the nation's demographics change to comprise more students of color and those from different socioeconomic backgrounds than has been the norm, there is a need to change current practices so that all students have the opportunity to succeed. Thus, school–university partnerships, particularly those that advocate a social justice agenda as t-center does, could prove to be the most logical approach to improving the quality of teachers, to enhancing teachers' understanding of their students, and consequently to improving students' academic performance. There are bound to be other institutions that will attempt to duplicate t-center's efforts. A case study of the Center's successes and obstacles should prove beneficial.

This study matters also in that most of the literature on school–university partnerships deals with the K–12 school site(s). The focus on the daily operations of the university side of the partnership can provide useful information.

The types of changes the Center is making seem responsive to the nation's social needs: better educational environments for the increasing numbers of ethnically, linguistically, and economically diverse students. The changes also

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pose a fundamental challenge to the traditional institution of higher education. Teacher preparation is in trouble, and the universities need to change their behaviors.

Educational reform is not an easy process; reconfiguring the arena in which the reform is implemented is even less so. Thus guidelines to assist other institutions in the reform effort should be helpful if only to cut down potential trial-and-error problems so that the reform organization can proceed directly to the important issue of improved teacher and student performance.

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